DOCUMENT RESUME

TE 000 503

ED 022 749

By- O'Donnell, John F.

THE NEW ENGLISH.

Pub Date Jan 68

Note- 12p.

Journal Cit- Greater Philadelphia Council of Teachers of English Newsletter; v6 n1 p10-7 Nov 1967, v6 n2 p6-9 Jan 1968

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.56

Descriptors- COMPOSITION (LITERARY), *CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, CURRICULUM PLANNING, CURRICULUM PROBLEMS, CURRICULUM RESEARCH, CURRICULUM STUDY CENTERS, *ENGLISH CURRICULUM, ENGLISH INSTRUCTION, *ENGLISH PROGRAMS, GRAMMAR, LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, LINGUISTICS, LITERATURE PROGRAMS, MODERN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM, SEQUENTIAL LEARNING, *SEQUENTIAL PROGRAMS, *SPIRAL CURRICULUM

Identifiers- *Project English

Traditional English curriculums are giving way to new English programs built on the foundations of research and scholarship. The "new" English, being developed by the Project English Centers throughout the country, attempts to utilize the characteristic structure of the subject to plan sequential and spiral curriculums replacing outdated techniques and repetitous planning. To improve the literature curriculums, the Centers are concentrating on complete masterpieces, rather than on selections from anthologies, and are emphasizing the literary work itself, close reading, intensive study of the underlying structure of the work, and supplementary wide personal reading--all within a sequential, spiral curriculum which employs the inductive approach. Language programs are being developed to incorporate generative grammar and to provide sequential units on language history, dictionaries, dialects, phonology, semantics, and syntax. For composition programs, the Centers are designing sequential approches to such important aspects of the writing process as ideas, form, diction, style, and mechanics. (LH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

THE NEW

I. THE "OLD" AND THE "NEW" DEFINED

When one speaks of the "old" and the "new" in English curricula, several important distinctions must be made. First of all, the "old" does not necessarily refer to that which was and no longer is. As many students of education, including Ianni and Josephs, have pointed out, at present there is between the emergence of a researchable idea and its implementation in the schools a lag which approaches forty years. (11:166) Thus, as the recently published *A Study of English Programs in Selected High Schools Which Consistently Educate Outstanding Students in English* (hereafter referred to as *A Study of English Programs*) shows, the curricula of schools, even those considered excellent, usually do not contain the "new" programs and approaches, but rather use what educational leaders term "the old." (29:116) Furthermore, many of the "new" curricula are still in their developmental stages. Few of the newly-created programs have been tested and disseminated. Thus, in this article, "old" refers to what is current in most schools; whereas, "new" refers to that which is used in relatively few schools as well as to that which is being developed.

II. THE WEAKNESS OF THE OLD AND THE UNDERLYING CONCEPTS OF THE NEW

Though most of the new curricula have not, as yet, found their ways into the programs of the schools, the need for such curricula is patent. A statement of the Project English Center at the University of Oregon excellently summarizes this need.

> "This curriculum has arisen out of several convictions about the instruction of English in American secondary schools: first, that any improvement in the English program must be preceded by a clear definition of the aims and content of that program; second, that in many respects the existing English curriculum is outdated and threadbare, reflecting little or nothing of what has happened in the last sixty years in such relevant fields as linguistics, semantics, rhetoric, literary analysis and criticism, and learning theory, and, finally, that some way must be found—some systematic and rational progression—by which the aimlessness and sterile repetition so often characteristic of secondary English instruction can be overcome." (18:1)

Oregon's insistence on "clear definition of the aims and content" mirrors the concern of the many who recognize that English programs suffer because they have been asked to be "all things to all men." (29:135) Sadly, the situation which J. N. Hook depicts is more often true than not.

> "In some schools English classes have become a dumping ground. When someone proposes that something be added to the curriculum (orientation, testing, guidance, dating, telephoning, TV-criticking —you name it), the chances are that it has something to do with language. At least it can be read about, written about, talked about. So someone says, 'Let's ask the English teachers to include this'." (13:80)

In answer to such demands on English curricula, the Project English Center at Indiana University has forcefully stated that "English is language, literature, and composition —period." (27:21) The Carnegie Center has made virtually the same statement and, in addition, has shown how these three areas should be intimately interrelated.

> "The group saw the interrelationship of these areas as fittingly represented by three interlocking triangles . . . only a small part of each of these studies is unrelated to the others: the larger portion of each, in fact, overlaps significantly with one or both of the others." (27:5-6)

The program of the University of Oregon (27:31), the Curriculum Based on Cognitive Processes of the Florida State University Center (27:11), and others emphatically endorse the Carnegie position.

The second point stressed in the Oregon statement, that is that "the existing English curriculum is outdated and threadbare, reflecting little or nothing of what has happened in the last sixty years," underlines, and even enlarges, the forty-year gap mentioned earlier in this paper and emphasizes the significance of the work of the Project English Centers, work which hopefully will, among other things, solve the following problem.

> "For the most part . . . the scholars at the forefront of their disciplines, those who might be able to make the greatest contribution to the substantive reorganization of their fields, . . . [are] . . . not involved in the development of curricula for the elementary and secondary schools. In consequence, school programs have often dealt inadequately or incorrectly with contemporary knowledge, and we have not reaped the benefits that might have come from a joining of the efforts of eminent scholars, wise and skillful teachers, and those trained in the fields related to teaching and learning." (4:3)

In short, Project English agrees with Bruner that those who most thoroughly know a discipline are best equipped to discover "the great and simple structuring ideas in terms of which instruction must proceed." (3:8)

The third aspect of Oregon's concern, "that some way must be found—some systematic and rational progression by which the aimlessness and sterile repetition so often characteristic of secondary [and elementary] English instruction can be overcome," has been the concern of Harvard's Jerome S. Bruner also.

Recurrent in the descriptions of the new curricula being developed in the Project English Centers are the words—"structure," "sequence," "spiral," and "discovery," all of which refer to concepts developed by Bruner and promulgated in what many educators consider the most significant book on the relation of learning theory to curriculum in recent educational literature, his *The Process of Education.*

However, as is often the case with seminal thinkers, Bruner's views are not always as well-stated and fully-developed as are those who have adopted his ideas and adapted

TE 000 503 ED022749

by John F. O'Donnell
Specialist in English and Social Studies, Upper Merion Area School District

them to specific disciplines. Thus, a student of the English curricula should read both Bruner and those (and there are many) who have used his concepts in developing programs.

For example, the rationale of the "structural" view of curriculum building is, I think, more clearly stated in John H. Fischer's article, "Curriculum Planning for the Years Ahead" than in Bruner's work.

> "In every subject field, important pioneering is needed. The expansion of knowledge has occurred so rapidly that it is now utterly impossible for the school to hope to deal effectively with any field simply by giving children a summary awareness of it. Instead we must analyze more effectively than ever before the characteristic structure of each field, the peculiarities of the discipline by which it is built, the distinctive quality of each subject as a unique 'way of knowing.' If new insights of this kind are to be developed, the scholarly specialists in every field must take the lead and do much of the work. Psychologists may shed light on concept development, and instructional specialists may devise teaching techniques, but in dealing with the distinctive nature of mathematics or history only the subject specialists can make the necessary analyses and provide many of the substantive materials." (8:337)

Once this "characteristic structure" of a subject is determined, and "the discovery, through redefinition of the subject, that its essential nature is progressive and cumulative" (21:13) is made, curriculum planners must create a sequence which is "designed to teach these subjects with scrupulous intellectual honesty." (4:13)

Though most of the "new" programs provide for a definite sequence of learnings, the work of the Project English Demonstration Center in Cleveland as described in George Hillocks' writings (12) and the program of the University of Nebraska Center deserve special attention. Since the Cleveland program is a vertically limited one, i.e., grades seven through nine, Nebraska's kindergarten-through-grade-twelve curriculum gives a better picture of an extensive, yet closely-knit, sequence.

> ". . . the entire curriculum is based upon a carefully defined sequential order in all aspects of the language arts. In language, for example, the lessons move from simple games with phonemic symbols in the elementary grades to such complexities as the historical evolution of the sound of language in grade nine or the sound system of Shakespeare's English in grade twelve. Literature is planned in terms of units that span the entire twelve years of English education; these units have an underlying structure, an underlying literature aspect, but they differ in complexity and they build on one another. With the myth, for example, Nebraska begins the simple approach to the classical myth in grade three, continues with the Norse myth in grade six, on through the Indian myth, the Hebrew religious narrative, and Beowulf until by grade twelve, students may have a real comprehension of the essence of a play like *Oedipus* or *Dr. Faustus*." (11:187-8)

Though Nebraska's statement, using the teaching of the nature of myth as an example, embodies Bruner's concept of "spiral," the choice of the words "build on one another" is unfortunate. Hook's description of the spiral curriculum is much more in keeping with Bruner's views.

> "The analogy of a spiral cone may be more helpful to curriculum makers than the more frequent analogy of an assembly line or that of piling block upon block. A spiral covers the same ground repetitively but on successively higher levels. A spiral in the shape of a cone, with the point at the bottom, likewise covers much of the same ground, again at steadily higher levels, but it also broadens as it ascends." (13:84)

After determining the structure of the discipline (in this case, English) and while establishing the sequential and spiral organization of the curriculum, planners must, according to Bruner, provide for student "discovery" of the structure. (4:20) Though basically methodological, discovery, via the inductive approach, to a large degree determines the sequence and spiral. As a matter of fact, it is, perhaps, the surest way for a student to get at the structure of a discipline, literature's for example.

> "Only through the inductive method can students begin to see the importance of what lies beneath the surface of the work of art. Asking questions that deal only with where a character went or what that character wore simply does not engage the student's powers of perception. Neither do lectures on literary backgrounds, an author's life, or the make-up of the Elizabethan stage. What then? Looking to the new critics, we find our direction through the literature itself—through the text, from which, by means of thoughtful questions, part of a carefully structured plan, the teacher may encourage students to induce what is vital to the nature of literature. Not only will students then induce the underlying vitality of literature, but they learn to look deeply into the core of any verbal art form—of any art form, perhaps of anything." (11:173-4)

Having given at least cursory attention to the basic concepts on which the better new curricula are based, let us, realizing that most of the work is either recently produced or still in progress, turn to an examination of the old and some of the new curricula in literature, in language, and in composition.

III. THE OLD AND THE NEW IN LITERATURE PROGRAMS

The study of literature, rather than the study of language or of composition, occupies the majority of time devoted to the study of English in our schools. Not only is this currently true as is demonstrated in the recent *A Study of English Programs,* which shows that 52.2 percent of instruction time is devoted to literature, 15.7 percent to composition, and only 13.5 percent to language (29:97), but it has also been true historically. As early as 1909 Boston developed a

(Cont. on p. 12)

e New English (Cont. from p. 11)
urse of study which gave two-thirds of the time in English reading and literature. (19:6)

As the work of the centers at Carnegie (27:6), Purdue 7:33), and elsewhere demonstrate, this emphasis is not ecessarily unwise. What is, and has been, unwise is the pproach stressed in many literature programs, i.e., either ronological, biographical, or, at times, non-literary. Both e chronological and biographical place emphasis on matters ot important to an understanding of literature *per se*. At est ancillary, the history of literature and the biographies of uthors have all too often replaced a close study of text. With his great emphasis on literary history and biography, far too nany English classrooms have become poor substitutes for ocial studies classrooms. (31:126) In addition, especially in he elementary school, students have been subjected to non-terature used as practice material for reading skills. (10:673)

The thematic approach and the "esoteric" approach, which eem so popular today (29:157-60), are little better. George Hillocks' remarks on the thematic approach are worth noting.

> "Does the unit have any basis of organization other than the theme? Does the unit treat problems which will arise in the student's later reading and thereby provide a basis for making inferences when the problems do arise? Does the unit systematically develop skill in reading, especially in making inferences involving the theme or concept? If the answers to these questions are negative, then the thematic unit is little better than the older grouping of short stories, poems, and plays, or than a simple linear movement from one work to another with little or no connection of any kind between the works." (12:12)

Commenting on the increasing emphasis on what might be termed the "esoteric" approach, Taylor stresses the problems inherent in "teaching the tenets of existentialism [and the like] to students who are none too sure of the meanings of theme, conflict or plot." (31:127) All of these approaches de-emphasize the best method of studying literature, a close reading of texts.

Furthermore, teachers of English, most of whom realize that "to encompass a great many selections precludes close reading of the texts, and that all the students receive is a smattering of literature without any hope of a real understanding of how a poem operates, for example," (29:133) are seemingly controlled by the oppressive "Given" of most English courses—the anthology.

In a recent study Evans and Lynch found that of the 8,500 selections in 72 high school anthologies of literature almost all were excerpted or abridged. The average contents of a volume ran to about 120 selections by 90 different authors with approximately 235 pages of "editorial apparatus." (7:39-56) Since anthologies are the only literature texts available in many schools, one is forced to question the quality of instruction in literature which the American public school student receives.

An even more basic reason for the traditional confusion and lack of direction in English curricula has been the irresponsible inability on the part of teachers, administrators,

and others to reach a clear consensus concerning the purposes of instruction in English. (29:153-6)

One of the most significant causes of this lack of consensus is the deeply-entrenched "fun-and-good-times-approach" faction. In responding to this view, Hillocks stresses his conviction (and it is the conviction of most new programs) that the chief objective should be to teach so that students will be able to read a work of literature independently with full understanding.

> "As certain words in the titles of literature anthologies suggest, the major goal in reading is adventure, fun, or good times. No one will argue that these are not laudable goals, but unfortunately they are goals that can be achieved by the student with much less effort in media other than books and magazines: movies, television, radio, and comics. The difficulty lies not so much in the goal itself as in the apparent failure of the ardent proponents of reading interest and good times to realize that the great pleasure and reward of reading comes through the revelation which an author makes through his craft and because of his genius. But to grasp the revelation fully, the reader cannot remain passive and demand entertainment; on the contrary, he must interact with the work; he must read and think creatively." (12:2)

As can be clearly seen in the previous statement or in the statements of many new curricula, especially Carnegie's (27:6), Nebraska's (11:181), and Portland, Oregon's (22:3-4), the inductive approach leading to "discovery" is an essential ingredient of the new programs. Nebraska's materials, for example, make the child's very first encounter with literature a "discovery" experience.

> "Questions addressed to the first grader attempt to induce the relationship of literature to life in a familiar story like Peter Rabbit, for example. Here the first-grader is asked to think about the difference between the character of Peter and that of his less rebellious sisters. Do they listen to their mother because they are girls? How does Mr. MacGregor appear to Peter? Does he remind you of something frightening? These kinds of questions, on a very simple level, allow the child to see that the story is more than just a story." (11:181)

A similar stress is part of *The Roberts English Series,* recently published by Harcourt, Brace and World. Beginning in third grade with a study of Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Block City" (23:1-17), and continuing with, for example, such "adult" works as T. S. Eliot's "The Ad-dressing of Cats" in fourth grade (24:222-35), Christopher Marlowe's "The Shepherd to his Love" in fifth grade (25:291), e. e. cummings' "In Just-Spring" in sixth grade (26:251), and other equally important pieces, the student is inductively led through this six-year program to an understanding of the nature of the literary art form.

Thus, not only do the new curricula encourage the reading of significant literature instead of bits and pieces, or castrated literature, or non-literature for reading practice, but they also demand a close reading of fewer works. This new emphasis will, they assert, more surely develop in the student

(Cont. on p. 14)

The New English (Cont. from p. 13)
an understanding of the structure of literature. But what is meant by "structure"?

In his important article, "The Structure of Literature," Walker asserts that "among teachers, critics, and students of literature there is unanimous agreement that the study of structure is the study of relationships, but there is considerable disagreement concerning the 'things' that are involved." (32:305)

The new programs reflect this disagreement. Consider these examples: First, Cleveland's Demonstration Center which asserts that "three structural areas present themselves immediately. The first deals with the picture of man produced by a writer, the second with levels of meaning, and the third with form and genre." (12:2) Second, Oregon's Project English Center whose program presents "the fundamental concepts of Subject, Form, and Point of View around which the six-year sequence is built." (27:32) Third, Carnegie's Curriculum in which there is emphasis on "perceiving: (1) what universal concern of men the literature is dealing with; (2) how it is modified by the environmental conditions of its place and time of origin; (3) the nature of the verbal art form in which it attains its being." (11:183) These differences, however, when examined closely are not as great as they first seem. And, since each of the new programs generates sequences of instruction related to its basic views, each has an autonomy which precludes any conflict on structure which would affect the progress of the student.

Just as there are different ideas concerning structure, so there are, of course, differences in sequences and spirals among the new curricula. As the Portland, Oregon *Guide for High School English* states,

> "In planning [sic] of a course in literature, sequences cannot always be designed as confidently as they can be in, say, history, another humane study. In the study of American history, for instance, the forging and implementation of the federal constitution must be dealt with before much sense can be made of the secession issue; but reasonable arguments can be found for teaching Frost before Donne." (22:8)

Though any number of examples of how the new curricula provide for sequence and spiral might be presented here: Indiana University's poetry sequence (27:22), The University of Nebraska's myth sequence (11:187-8), Portland, Oregon's tragedy sequence (22:8-9), to name just a few, the sequence developed by the Demonstration Center in Cleveland is illustrative of the best of the new sequential programs.

> "Materials for teaching the simple aspects of symbolism to bright students can be utilized effectively as early as the seventh grade. Beginning with a discussion and analysis of the meanings and uses of conventional symbols, the students can move to the interpretation of simple fables and parables or other simple allegories whose symbols are rigid and singular, involving only a one to one relationship between symbol and the thing symbolized. At later grade levels the symbols with which a student works can

(Cont. on next page)

> become increasingly less rigid and more complex while the clues which an author offers for interpretation can become fewer and fewer. The student will eventually be ready to deal with a spectrum of allegory ranging from a work like *Everyman*, in which there is a maximum of clues for interpretation, to a work like *The Four Quartets*, in which clues are at a minimum. For the average student, however, the abstraction of objectified work with levels of meaning seems to prevent the introduction of even the easiest concepts and materials until the ninth grade level." (12:10-11)

If the close reading of texts within the ever-ascending and ever-widening spiral of a sequential program is one crucial characteristic of strong curricula in literature, guided individual reading seems to be, according to Squire and Applebee, another. (29:187) The need for such programs has led two conferences of English department chairmen to recommend libraries of five hundred appropriate titles in every English classroom. (16:13) This two-pronged approach of intensive reading and related, wide reading should help teachers attain the two primary objectives of instruction in literature—to teach students how to read well and to make them avid readers.

In summary, the imperatives of the new curricula are clear: teach masterpieces with full attention on the work itself, rather than on literary history, social background, or biographical information; read complete works rather than selections or abridgements; make an intensive study of the underlying structure, rather than extensive and surface reading for "enjoyment" and "appreciation"; provide for wide personal reading to complement the close reading of a limited number of carefully-selected works; and do all of these within a sequential, spiral curricula which employs the discovery approach.

IV. THE OLD AND THE NEW IN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

In the teaching of language revolutionary changes have occurred. However, such changes are, as yet, not apparent in the majority of school curricula. But the validity of the new programs should insure an almost complete break with the traditional approach within the next decade.

At present, the study of language is, in most schools, equivalent to the study of grammar and usage only. And even these aspects have been either largely ignored or endlessly repeated by these schools. A recent national study of high school English programs concludes that "the most striking overall impression is the absence of programs in language." (29:92) Furthermore, "the language books tend to be almost universally purchased and universally ignored. Many teachers keep a set on their shelves in conformity with the departmental requirement." (29:113) In schools which give some attention to language, generally just grammar and usage, the following is often the way it is presented:

> ". . . it usually comes at the beginning of a course and is called a 'review.' One gets the impression that grammar is never studied directly but instead is

(Cont. on p. 16)

The New English (Cont. from p. 15)

> 'reviewed' each year, first in the seventh grade and finally in the freshman year of college. And this review is likely to be very much the same sort of thing year after year." (15:79)

This constant reviewing, reinforced by "language and composition books [which] teach the same content at every grade level" (29:233), endlessly repeats "generalizations and rules set forth as a complete system in books which are little more than rewrites of the self improvement manuals of eighteenth century England . . . [and] . . . incapable of describing the dynamics of language." (14:5)

Frustrated by such a situation, Anne Lefcourt recently studied five commonly used elementary school language series in order to determine the extent to which they contain linguistic and/or transformational grammar. She found form and structure as a basis for language study largely ignored in these books, which instead stressed the traditional, functional, language-for-use approach, an approach infested by such "rules" as follows:

> "In grade three in one series children are given a list of verbs, 'laugh,' 'hit,' 'fly.' Any of these could be a noun, but the statement is made, 'These words are action words or verbs.' In another text, children in the second and third grades are urged to write 'good' sentences when their only criteria for judging sentences are the capital letter and period." (17:600)

Traditional grammar is not only unable to describe accurately the nature of language, but it has also failed to attain its "language-for-use" goal. In studies by Harris (20), Baird (2), and many others, the inability of traditional grammar to affect an improvement in writing and speaking has been clearly demonstrated.

Interest in finding something to replace an invalid and impractical grammar has led some adventurous educators through the frustrations of the short-lived structural linguistic approach to what is now grandly called the "New Grammar." However, the new grammar, termed either "transformational" or "generative," is not as completely "new" as some persons fear it is. As the Purdue Center convincingly argues, it is really "an imaginative re-ordering of what we have always known." (27:33) Obviously, the English language is the same. The new grammar is merely another way of getting at the nature of our language. This point is stressed in Mildred Jeffrey's fine description of transformational grammar.

> "In a sense, then, T-grammar is not actually 'new'; it is an enlargement and refinement of traditional grammar. But it breaks with the past in trying to make explicit many grammatical concepts that used to be left to intuition (an omission that has been a boon for the bright student, a bane for the dull). In the process of being explicit, the T-grammarians have been forced to examine syntactical items with increasing care. From this scrutiny has arisen an extremely useful hypothesis: Every sentence but the very simplest ('People breathe,' say) has both a *surface* structure (visible on the page and explainable in such traditional terms as subject-transitive verb-object) and a *deep* structure, which is the ur-sentence or series of sentences from which the given

> statement has been formed (or 'transformed'). Knowledge of the ancestry (deep structure) of any fairly complicated sentence becomes a splendid tool for avoiding ambiguity or awkwardness." (14:7)

In addition to the fact that transformational, or generative, grammar is the currently valid grammar and, therefore, meets Noam Chomsky's demand that we teach the grammar "which appears to be true, given the evidence presently available" (5:593), it also seems, though the evidence is limited, that "if students possess a knowledge of generative grammar, the proportion of well-formed sentences they write is significantly increased." (9:363)

The reason for this significant influence is probably related to the new grammar's "assumption that language has patterns that are within the students' powers to observe and analyze, . . . [and that] . . . the burden of intellectual activity [should be] placed not on the teacher or textbook but on the student." (27:28) In short, the student, even the slow learner as the Indiana University Center has shown (27:22), can inductively discover certain linguistic truths. In studying traditional grammar, he was passive; in studying the new grammar, he is actively engaged.

However, even if there were no evidence of significant influence on writing, studies of aspects of language are, as the Portland, Oregon *Guide for High School English* states, "matters of interest and cultural value in their own right and hence worthy of inclusion in the high school curriculum." (22:28-29)

The Portland Curriculum includes not only the study of grammar and usage, but also such often-neglected areas as the dictionary as a linguistic tool, the history of language, semantics, dialects, and so forth. This enlarging of scope is common to nearly all new programs in language. For example, the Center at the University of Minnesota is preparing thirty-one units, including "Introduction to Transformational Grammar," "An Historical Study of the English Lexicon," "The Nature of Meaning in Language," "The Social and Psychological Implications," and twenty-seven others. (27:24-25)

One of the most promising attempts to create a significant scope and sequence and, thereby, overcome the "chaos in most school programs in language" (29:92) is the work of the Oregon Center.

> "We are developing two areas—one concerned with grammar, the other with related areas of history, phonology, etc. The grammar is transformational, beginning in the seventh grade with the basic structure of the 'kernal' sentence, defined in eighteen phase structure rules. These are organized so that they can be expanded periodically as students are better able to comprehend linguistic complexities. The eighth grade introduces transformations, both single base (e.g., questions and passives) and double base (compound structures, relative clauses leading to adjectives, possessives, etc.). In the ninth and tenth grades we expand the grammar internally by developing more sophisticated notions of the determiner, the negative, the imperative, and various kinds of elements attached to the transitive verb: particles, indirect objects and complements.
> The second part of the curriculum starts in the seventh grade with social and regional variations in language. The eighth grade deals with writing systems and introduces phonology. The ninth and tenth grades include units on the syntax and phonology of Shakespeare. In the last two years we plan to have units on the history of language—both internal and external—and to touch on methods of linguistic research as they relate to the origin and development of language and to language families." (27:32-3)

(To be concluded)

The New English

(Concluded from November Issue)

At present there are only two commercially-produced, sequential programs which are honest representations of the transformational approach — Addison-Wesley's and Harcourt, Brace and World's. The latter written by Paul Roberts seems for many reasons, including especially its scholarly integration of literature, language, and composition, to be the better. *The Roberts English Series* (23, 24, 25, and 26) presents a sequential and spiral study of syntax, phonology, vocabulary, etymology, the history of English, and the dictionary, all of which are interrelated with literature and composition.

There is so much happening in language curricula, especially in grammar, that it is almost impossible to predict what the final outcome will be. However, even this problem has not gone unnoticed by the omnipresent U. S. O. E. which has commissioned Northern Illinois University (27:28) to find the answer to this and other important curricular questions. Whatever these answers are, we can be sure that language curricula will never again be what they were just a few years ago.

V. THE OLD AND THE NEW IN COMPOSITION PROGRAMS

According to the recent and very important *Study of English Programs,* so often referred to in this article,—

> "The most discouraging conclusion to be deduced from analyzing the data concerning instruction in writing is that there is simply very little of it. On the basis of classroom observation, teachers of all levels in all schools combined spent only 15.7 percent of their class time emphasizing composition.
> Moreover, the bulk of the instruction during the 15.7 percent of total class time devoted to writing was *instruction after the fact*—after papers had been written." (29:192-3)

Clearly there are significant problems in our present composition programs.

Furthermore, the materials which have been used in nearly all schools, i.e., grammar-composition texts, devote little attention to writing beyond the sentence—as little as 18.8 percent of their total pages according to Lynch and Evans (29: 204), who also found that "composition texts generally do not offer any clear differentiation from year to year." (29:205)

With such materials it is understandable that "writing is the disgrace of American education" (30:3) and that a recent study at The University of Georgia Project English Center "revealed that programs in written composition gave little attention to planned sequences in learning." (27:14) This study also pointed out that generally children in grades one through six are subjected to writing assignments which stress personal experiences, imaginative composition, and letters at the expense of expository writing. (27:13)

If, as the study demonstrates, the elementary program has certain major weaknesses, these are compounded by the sec-

by John F. O'Donnell
Specialist, English & Social Studies, Upper Merion School Dist.

ondary school's continued lack of sequence (29:219) and further emphasis on the product of writing rather than the process. High school composition "guides" usually attempt to establish the number and length of papers to be written, but rarely consider what principles of writing are to be taught and in what order. (29:209)

In most schools the composition program is almost completely at the discretion of each teacher and usually consists in his assigning a theme, correcting it, reviewing general weaknesses (usually in mechanics) with the class, and assigning a revision. (29:215) Product rather than process is the emphasis.

> "To most teachers correcting papers is synonymous with teaching writing. As evidence of this attitude is their response to questions posed during the interview with the entire English departments. One of these questions has to do with the proportion of teaching time or emphasis on composition. To this query, the most typical response was that teachers would be quite happy to devote more time and emphasis to composition (up to 50 percent of their time), but it was impossible under existing conditions of class load. In other words, there was simply not time to *correct more papers* than were currently being produced." (29:194)

And within such "teaching" procedures, mechanics most often receives top priority.

Thus, one of the first concerns of most new curricula in composition is to provide for a balanced and adequate attention to important aspects of the writing process, among which are—so say Diederich, Carlton, and French of E. T. S.—ideas, form, diction, style, and mechanics. (2:16)

Furthermore, that the sequence and spiral concepts, which are part of nearly all new English curricula, are absolutely essential in composition and rhetoric programs is implicit in the work of the Center at Northwestern University, which stresses such concepts in its two-part sequence in the basic processes of composition. (27:30) Ohio State's Center, adhering to the same principle, is developing sequential "units based on generative grammar and psycholinguistic theory." (27:30) Indiana University's program revolves around the classical rhetorician's principles of *inventio*, *dispositio*, and *elocutio* and is, like the others, sequential and spiral. (27: 21-2)

In addition, the centers at Oregon and Nebraska have developed excellent, carefully-detailed sequences. Nebraska's work, especially at the primary and intermediate levels, exemplifies the need for small, incremental steps in a sequence. (30:11) Interestingly, Florida State's Center which adapted Nebraska's materials and procedures in micro-rhetoric thinks that "incremental steps in the sequence need to be made even smaller." (27:13) One of the most interesting sequential programs, The University of Oregon's, explicitly emphasizes its debt of gratitude to Bruner's concept of the spiral.

(Continued on page 8)

The New English

(From page 7)

> "In spite of the complexity of the activity of composing, we believe that there is a teachable structure underlying it, and that Bruner's concept of the spiral accurately describes the process of accretion by which the student's ability to compose can deepen and mature as he moves along through the six years of the curriculum." (18:3-4)

Oregon's rhetoric program also provides us with an excellent example of the kind of scope and sequence which all the new curricula seek to establish.

> "The three basic kinds of 'how to' which undergird the work in rhetoric are, first, *substance*, or how to explore, systematically and responsibly, the world of facts and ideas for the subject matter of communication; second, *structure*, or how to give order and development to this subject matter; and, third, *style*, or how to use most effectively the special qualities of words, phrases, and sentences to achieve the rhetorical purpose. These categories are, of course, not airtight compartments; they are all part of the rhetorical art. In the 'spiral' nature of this curriculum, where skills required at the most advanced levels must be worked on at the elementary levels, these terms merely designate a shift of emphasis from one part of this art to another, not a 'topic' to be 'mastered' and then abandoned in favor of something totally new.
> Within the three categories of substance, structure, and style, the materials in the new curriculum move, generally, from the familiar to the novel, from concrete to the abstract, from the simple to the complex. In the seventh grade, for example, the student begins with what he knows best, people, places, animals, events—the familiar and the concrete—and with simple narrative, and some imaginative, writing. In the eighth and later grades, this emphasis on the student's own personal world is progressively expanded toward conceptual realism. The ninth and tenth grades emphasize these more advanced considerations of subject, structure, and style by focusing upon various purposes for writing and speaking, upon semantics and logic, and upon further imaginative writing." (27:33)

The work in rhetoric at Nebraska has been strongly influenced by Francis Christensen, whose "rhetorical theory of the sentence that will not merely combine the ideas of primer sentence, but will 'generate' new ideas" (6:11) may be the basis for a significant "breakthrough" in composition curricula. Christensen convincingly argues that many of our present notions concerning the type of instruction a student should receive, such as instruction in sentence openers (6:9-10), are invalid. He would agree with Margaret Ashida and Leslie Whipp that "once he sees that the traditional prescriptions which he has been taught are unrelated to writing practices" the student can change his writing "by conscious application of specific, positive, and responsible knowledge of the structure of contemporary exposition." (1:21) Ideas such as these make changes in composition instruction unavoidable.

VI. A VERY BRIEF CONCLUSION

Under assault by the ideas of Christensen, Bruner, Hillocks, and many others, and weakened by the aggressive efforts of the federal government and other agencies, the traditional curricula in English are falling. Dust and rubble make it impossible to see clearly what is being erected in their place. However, if the new "structures" are built on the solid foundations of research, they may withstand future attacks.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Ashida, Margaret E., and Whipp, Leslie T., "A Slide-Rule Composition Course," *College English*, Volume 25, October, 1963, pp. 18-22.
2. Baird, Ruth Cates, "A Survey of Errors in English Composition," *Journal of Educational Research*, Volume 56, January, 1963, pp. 228-235.
3. Bruner, Jerome S., "Introduction: The New Educational Technology," *The American Behavioral Scientist*, Volume VI, November, 1962, pp. 5-8.
4. ———, *The Process of Education*, New York, Vintage Books, 1960.
5. Chomsky, Noam, "The Current Scene in Linguistics," *College English*, Volume 27, May, 1966, pp. 587-595.
6. Christensen, Francis, "Notes Toward A New Rhetoric: I. Sentence Openers," *College English*, Volume 25, October, 1963, pp. 7-11.
7. *Claremont Reading Conference*, Claremont, California Claremont Graduate School, 1962, pp. 39-56.
8. Fischer, John H., "Curriculum Planning for the Years Ahead," *School and Society*, Volume 90, October, 1962, pp. 337-339.
9. Gunderson, Doris V., "U.S. Office of Education: Report on Cooperative Research Projects," *English Journal*, Volume 55, March, 1966, pp. 361-365.
10. Hatfield, W. Wilbur, "Humanizing the Language Arts," *Elementary English*, Volume 42, October, 1963, pp. 673-678.
11. Heath, Robert W., editor, *New Curricula*, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, pp. 161-212.
12. Hillocks, George, Jr., *Conference 1: Structure and Teaching: Building the English Curriculum*, Cleveland, Project English Demonstration Center, no date.
13. Hook, J. N., "If a Curriculum Is to Be Sequential," *The English Journal*, Volume 51, February, 1962, pp. 79-84.
14. Jeffrey, Mildred, "T-Man to the Rescue," *The Hofstra Review*, Volume 1, Autumn, 1966, pp. 5-10.
15. Kitzhaber, Gorrell, and Roberts, *Education for College*, New York, Ronald Press, 1961, pp. 83-4.
16. Lacampagne, Robert, editor, *High School Departments of English: Their Organization, Administration, and Supervision*, Champaign, Illinois, National Council of Teachers of English, 1965.
17. Lefcourt, Ann, "Linguistics and Elementary School Textbooks," *Elementary English*, Volume 40, October, 1963, pp. 598-601.
18. Love, Glen A., "A Rhetoric Curriculum for the Secondary Schools," *Dialog*, Fall, 1966, pp. 1-5.
19. Mackintosh, Helen, "Language Arts Curriculum: Fifty Year Highlights of the Elementary Program," *Elementary English*, Volume 40, January, 1963, pp. 5-14, 55.
20. National Council of Teachers of English, *Research in Written Composition*, Champaign, Illinois, 1963, pp. 70-83.
21. National Education Association, *The Scholars Look at the Schools: A Report of the Disciplines Seminar*, Washington, D.C., 1961.
22. Portland Public Schools, *Guide for High School English—Grades 9-12, Volume 1*, Portland, Oregon, 1962.
23. Roberts, Paul, *The Roberts English Series: A Linguistics Program—Book 3*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966.
24. Roberts, Paul, *The Roberts English Series: A Linguistics Program—Book 4*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966.
25. Roberts, Paul, *The Roberts English Series: A Linguistics Program—Book 5*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966.